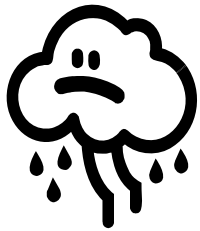


Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
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*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, May 1, 2007

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Detroit Free Press news briefs

May 1, 2007

Mom pleads guilty in baby's death

A 23-year-old Detroit woman pleaded guilty Monday in the Dec. 8, 2005, suffocation death of her 9-month-old son.

Jessica O'Neal pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of her baby, Malik, under an agreement by which she will be sentenced to 20-30 years in prison. She is to be sentenced May 15 by Wayne County Circuit Judge Ulysses Boykin.

O'Neal admitted smothering Malik because he would not stop crying. She then wrapped his body in a blue plastic trash bag and put it in a cabinet in the basement of the child's paternal grandmother. O'Neal, who was living in the home, said a friend was watching the baby. Eight days later, O'Neal was hospitalized for a diabetic condition and told her doctor that her baby may have been kidnapped. Officers later found the body.



Mom accused of killing kids granted new mental exam

Defense says signs indicate she's insane.

By Chad Halcom

Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A Macomb Township woman accused of killing her two children and the family pets will get an independent expert to analyze her mental state prior to a preliminary exam next month.

Jennifer Anne Kukla, 30, and her defense attorney obtained court approval for funds to hire expert Lyle Danuloff to review Kukla's competency for trial and legal culpability. The approval was made Monday at a hearing at 41A District Court in Shelby Township.

An analysis at the state Center for Forensic Psychiatry determined that Kukla is competent for trial, meaning she can understand the charges against her and assist her attorney in preparing a defense. An additional finding on "culpability," or ability to know right or wrong and control her behavior, is still pending.

"Everything I've seen and heard in her case leads me to believe, at least thus far, that she might be insane. And I'm hoping the expert we obtained today in court will help enable us to present a case for that," explained her attorney, Steven Freers. "Because from my experience I'm not very optimistic about what the Forensic Center might find."

Alexandra Kukla, 8, and Ashley Kukla, 5, died Feb. 4 of multiple stab wounds to the neck. Also killed were three dogs and a pet mouse at the Kukla family's mobile home on Chevalier drive.

Their mother remains at the Macomb County Jail without bond awaiting the June 21 preliminary exam before 41A District Judge Douglas P. Shepherd. Both prosecution and defense hope that the Forensic Center's reports and Danuloff's analysis and conclusions will be complete in time for the case to proceed on that date.

"If we disagree with any of the findings of Dr. Danuloff, or the Forensic Center on culpability we can still hire an independent expert of our own to challenge them," said William Cataldo, chief of homicides for Macomb County Prosecutor's office.

"It's possible the defense could change tactics, but we still expect sanity to be the issue of this case."

Cataldo added, meanwhile, that the prosecution had no objection to Freers' choice of Danuloff and that the Farmington Hills-based doctor comes with a better reputation than some experts who have been hired by defense attorneys. Danuloff has some expertise in neurological disorders as well as psychiatric issues related to families and parenting.

Prosecutors have noted that Kukla was able to answer investigators' questions after her arrest, and her sister, Lauren Kukla, reported in a 911 call to police that the defendant believed she was going "to the depths of hell" for her actions -- implying that she understood the moral nature of them.

Freers, meanwhile, contends his client has seemed incoherent or lacking a "solid grip on reality."

Kukla faces two counts of first-degree murder in the slayings, and investigators believe she spent several hours alone in the mobile home with the bodies before a relative arrived to check on her. If convicted as charged, she would face a mandatory life in prison with no chance of parole.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/050107/loc_mom001.shtml



Michigan is neglecting its most vulnerable kids

Saturday, April 21, 2007

By Sharon Emery

Booth Newspapers

It's hard to imagine a role the state of Michigan has failed to fulfill more spectacularly than that of nurturing parent.

It's stingy with its affections -- as evidenced by the woeful lack of foster and adoptive families for the 19,000 children in its child welfare system.

And, sadder still, it's stingy with its resources in providing for them.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has proposed spending \$35 million more on child welfare in 2008, but that and other new spending initiatives assume passage of nearly \$1.6 billion in new tax revenue for the 2007 and 2008 fiscal years.

Until lawmakers make decisions on revenue, there really can be no decisions on spending.

When it comes to its neediest and most vulnerable children, Michigan appears bankrupt on several counts.

Which is why the state finds itself in U.S. District Court in Detroit, defending itself in a class-action lawsuit brought by Children's Rights, a nonprofit advocacy group that has forced foster care changes in several states.

The charge? Basically that the state has subjected foster care children to the same kind of neglect and abuse it was supposed to be saving them from. Cases cited in the suit include that of a 16-year-old girl who over 14 years was in 10 different placements, some of which subjected her to physical and sexual abuse.

Michigan stands charged with failing to provide basic physical and mental care; failing to avoid repeated moves of children from home to home; failing to adequately monitor children's safety; and failing to address high worker caseloads and turnover.

Department of Human Services officials, who administer the child welfare system, ended settlement talks with Children's Rights on April 11, saying the cash-strapped state has no funds to back them up on any agreement they might make. And U.S. District Judge Nancy Edmunds has denied the state's request to dismiss the suit.

Michigan's child welfare system is in quite a fix. The state's own reports have already leveled heavy condemnation.

There's the 2005 state Auditor General's Office finding that the state had failed to do periodic criminal background checks on adults caring for foster children, and failed to ensure that caseworkers performed required visits to check on the safety of foster children.

There are years of reports from the Office of Children's Ombudsman, all concluding that caseworker failure to follow laws and procedures is the leading reason why the child welfare system fails. Among the reasons for that failure: inexperienced, undertrained, burned-out workers with insufficient supervision.

Today, as an agency fulfilling various human needs in an economic downturn that just won't quit, DHS is

defined by two intersecting lines that form a big, imposing X.

One line slices diagonally in an ever ascending trajectory. That line represents caseload, up about 46 percent since 2000.

The other line is DHS work force, descending about 27 percent, down more than 3,500 jobs.

Nineteen months ago DHS Director Marianne Udow testified before the Senate Families and Human Services Committee that the agency needed at least 160 more child protection workers, at a cost of about \$11 million, to get caseloads down to the recommended 15-to-1 ratio.

She got 51 more child protection workers this year. Caseloads are now between 25-to-1 and 60-to-1. Close, but probably not good enough to win in court. A June 2008 trial date has been set.

Children's Rights had been working with the state to make reforms before filing the lawsuit in August, but the group said progress was too slow.

As Udow told lawmakers back in September of 2005: "Resources are a very important part of this problem. In every state where there have been challenges to the system ... the system has been improved with significant increases in resources."

Waiting longer is unlikely to make that statement any less true.

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Article published May 1, 2007

Owner of adult foster care home voluntarily surrendered license

No residents were in the home when it burned April 22

The owner of a former adult foster care home had voluntarily surrendered her license before it burned to the ground April 22.

Residents were removed from the property Feb. 9, a short time after police found materials used to make methamphetamine when they searched a garage near the house.

Mauren Sorbet, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Human Services, said the owner of Pine Hill Adult Foster Care is no longer licensed with the state.

Sobert was unable to say when the license was surrendered.

Previous searches of the DHS web site found that foster home's owner Kellie Lauer, who is no longer listed in the DHS licensee database.

Sorbet said the voluntary revocation allows the state's licensing agents to deny Lauer a license for the next five years.

"That denial is good for up to five years," she said. "It's not likely she could become licensed again in the next five years."



THE BAY CITY TIMES

Lutheran Home counselor enters 'no contest' plea in teen sex charge

Tuesday, May 01, 2007

By CRYSTAL HARMON

TIMES WRITER

A 46-year-old Midland County woman has pleaded no contest to a charge that she had sexual relations with a detained juvenile while she worked as a social worker in Bay County.

Annette J. Belonga entered the plea to a second-degree criminal sexual conduct charge in Bay County Circuit Court for charges stemming from an alleged sexual relationship three years ago with a boy - then 16 - who was a resident of the Bay County Lutheran Home.

In exchange for the plea, prosecutors dismissed two other charges, of second- and third-degree criminal sexual conduct.

The plea bargain, reached by Belonga and her attorney, C. Michael Gorte, along with assistant Bay County Prosecutor Scott Gordon, sets the minimum sentence at between 29 and 57 months; if Bay County Circuit Judge Kenneth W. Schmidt imposes a higher sentence, Belonga may withdraw her plea. The maximum penalty for second-degree criminal sexual conduct is 15 years in prison.

The no-contest plea is not an admission of guilt, but is treated as such for the purpose of sentencing.

Belonga's alleged victim, now a 19-year-old Clare resident, has sued Belonga and Lutheran Child & Family Services, along with the residential home's director, in Bay County Circuit Court. No trial date has been set.

He alleges in his suit that Belonga has a history of poor judgment and immoral conduct as a social worker and that the Lutheran Child and Family Services should not have allowed her to be in charge of troubled youths.

The man, whose name is being withheld by The Times, claims Belonga's actions caused him trauma, confusion and suffering, among other damages.

Belonga remains out on bond awaiting her sentencing at 1:30 p.m. June 18.

Prosecutors allege that Belonga had sexual intercourse and oral sex with the boy in her office at the Lutheran Home at 304 N. Tuscola Road in June 2004. The home, operated by Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan, provides housing and counseling for young offenders.

The victim also claims the two had sex in the woods near Tawas City after Belonga drove him to Grayling to obtain an ID card.

Although the victim was 16 at the time of the alleged sexual incidents - the legal age of consent in Michigan - state law allows teachers and counselors to be criminally charged for having sex with students or residents under their authority who are 16 or 17 years old, even if it is consensual.

According to records of the state's Consumer and Industry Services, Belonga's social work license had been suspended in March 2004 for "lack of good moral character" while working as an infant mental health counselor in Alma.

State officials suspended her license after she showed up late for several meetings, fell asleep while meeting with clients and was found to be living with the father of one of the infants whose case she was

handling.

According to a police report, Bay County Lutheran Home administrator Colleen Gorman told police she became aware after hiring Belonga that her license had been suspended, but that she allowed her employment to continue because she "didn't need" a license.

Gorman told police she confronted Belonga in August 2004 about "professional boundaries," including the alleged victim physically leaning on her during group counseling sessions. Belonga resigned after the confrontation.

Gorman contacted police in 2005 after discovering love letters to Belonga from the alleged victim.

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Seeds of Grace plan to open free clinic

By Nu Yang
 Staff Writer

Wednesday, April 25, 2007 12:23 PM EDT

Seeds of Grace is about a second chance — another opportunity to start over. A group of dedicated volunteers want to help those that are struggling to get by in Allegan County by opening a homeless shelter and free medical clinic in Allegan.

"The first name we thought of was Seeds of Change," said board member Earl Kranz.

He and his wife, Judy, traded

"change" to "grace" to reflect how everyone received grace whether they deserved it or not.



Standing in one of the renovated rooms of the free clinic are board members (from left) Earl Kranz, Judy Kranz, Barbara Katsma, clinic director Linda Misak and Jamie Bont. Board members not pictured are Rachel Hill, Kimm Youdell, Pastor Dave Alderman and Keith Bont. (Photo by Nu Yang)

"When they walk through the door, they are given a second chance," Kranz said. "All their problems stop at the door—drugs, alcohol, money—it's a second chance, period."

Kranz said the idea came to Judy last year when the only other shelter in the county at Plainwell Assembly of God closed. Instead of volunteering at a shelter, she was encouraged to start one.

"It's tough to see the homeless problem, hard to get numbers," Kranz said. "It's spread out everywhere. It's not like Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo where there's a main common hub. It's rural and broken up here."

The volunteers at Seeds of Grace want to raise that awareness by opening a free medical clinic in June.

The group only has a couple of weeks to prepare, but they are confident they will be ready to serve those in need.

Housed in the lower level of the Allegan Area Community Center, 330 Trowbridge St. in Allegan, the clinic will have an open house on Friday, June 1, from 4 to 7 p.m. and officially open on its regular day schedule on Thursday, June 7, from 2 to 8 p.m.

Kranz said the clinic has received positive response from many. Donations have helped them get a head start, but they always need more.

The basement of the center is filled with donated beds, chairs, hospital equipment and computers, but they still lack even the simplest of things such as phones, ink cartridges and even bandages.

"Everyone understands the need for health care," Kranz said. "But a lot of people have to ask themselves, 'Do I go to the doctor or do I buy dinner?'"

In addition to donations, the clinic is also in need of volunteers—from nurses to doctors to people willing to help patients with paperwork or even answer phones. A medical director is also needed for when the clinic is open on Thursdays.

"All they need to bring is a willing heart," Kranz said.

According to clinic director Linda Misak the clinic will serve anyone over 18 who does not have health insurance. Services will include immunizations, prescriptions and blood pressure tests. Those who are insured and who have emergencies still need to see their family doctor.

Even though the clinic is not meant to be used for continuing care, Misak hopes it will become a resource for its patients.

"I worked in the ER for 18 years," she said. "I know how busy it can get."

Once the clinic is in operation, the next step will be to find a way to open the shelter. Kranz said he is looking for at least five acres of land to build on.

"We want to make a building that will house 100 beds for families," he said.

A men's facility is also being planned.

Those who come to the shelter will be provided with housing, education, job skills and counseling.

Kranz said programs would be six to nine months long.

"We need community support to make this work," he said.

The public is invited to the spaghetti dinner benefit on Thursday, April 26, at Kristine's Kafe, 142 St. Main St. in Plainwell from 4 to 7 p.m. The \$5 meal also includes drink and dessert. All proceeds will go to Seeds of Grace.

For more information on volunteering or donations, contact the group at (269) 288-0253 or at alleganseedsofgrace@yahoo.com.

05/01/2007

Medicaid cuts hit patients

BY CHRISTINE FINGER
cfinger@record-eagle.com

TRAVERSE CITY — Cuts to Medicaid reimbursements might ease Michigan's budget troubles, but will end up shortchanging patients in the long run, said local health care providers.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm notified providers on Monday that state payments for serving Medicaid patients would be cut by 6 percent beginning June 1 unless state legislators agree on another solution to a \$500 million budget deficit.

Flora Biancalana, a physician at Traverse City's Rising Star Wellness Center, said the reimbursement cut could prompt providers to stop accepting Medicaid patients. They currently receive 35 cents on the dollar for services provided to patients with Medicaid, which covers low-income adults and children.

"I'm really going to have to consider that," she said. "I'm already close to 30 percent Medicaid. That's almost unheard of for a general practitioner. You can't keep your doors open."

The reductions wouldn't directly impact benefits available to recipients. But Biancalana, who also serves as medical director for the Community Health Clinic, said Medicaid patients could be left with few places to go for health care. She said the clinic sometimes serves patients with Medicaid coverage if they cannot be seen anywhere else.

"We try not to; it's not our mission," she said. "But already we've had to make a few exceptions here and there. It's the whole access issue."

Shutting off the flow of Medicaid patients isn't an option for Munson Medical Center because hospitals cannot refuse to treat Medicaid recipients. Last year, Munson lost about \$2.5 million in direct costs of providing Medicaid services, said Ed Ness, the hospital's president and chief executive officer.

"We've seen a dramatic increase in the last couple of years in the number of Medicaid patients and the number of charity care cases," he said.

Ness agreed that the state cuts could limit health care access for Medicaid recipients, particularly to preventative medical services.

"Ultimately, those people will still need care," he said. "They will be treated in a more expensive setting in the emergency room."

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Michigan Report

April 30, 2007

GROUP TO WORK ON HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ALL RESIDENTS

A new coalition of groups, ranging from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce to the AFL-CIO has formed a new organization to try and find long-term solutions to help the uninsured in the state.

The Michigan Health Insurance Access Advisory will work to identify and put in place strategies to make sure residents can access affordable health insurance. The group consists of business associations, health care providers, consumers, labor groups and insurance companies from across the state and says it is a non-partisan, non-governmental group.

“One thing we do agree on is that the cost of the uninsured finds its way back to all of us as paying customers,” said Rob Fowler, chair of the group and president of the Small Business Association of Michigan in a statement. “MHIAC is taking a long view on the issue of the uninsured and is not tied to a particular administration or legislature.”

The group will meet once or twice a year and is currently working on educating the public and others about the affect having uninsured people in the state has on the community. The group is also working to create a study that would assist members in understanding the economics of health care in the state and would examine the impact different heath care insurance options have on the state. The study would be used to develop a health care insurance proposal the group would advocate to the public and policy makers.



Riverview sale hurts needy patients most

May 1, 2007

As a social worker on Detroit's east side, I know many people who depend on St. John Detroit Riverview Hospital for emergency and other medical needs ("Hospital shuffle rattles Detroit: Riverview to close; Karmanos center to move in, leave DMC," April 24). Closing this facility as a general hospital would have a significant impact on the ability of the poor and vulnerable of our area to access basic medical care.

Perhaps this discussion will force the community to consider why so many people have to seek basic medical or mental health treatment in the emergency room. Thousands of Detroiters are not able to get health insurance, and for the most part our many clinics for the uninsured are at or over capacity.

We cannot have a real discussion on the effects of hospital restructuring without addressing the immediate need for medical care for the uninsured. Otherwise, when Riverview closes, the most vulnerable of our city will just have one less place to go in the inadequate -- and expensive -- cycle through the emergency rooms and crisis centers.

Larry LaCross

Detroit

Wrong person to complain

Is Detroit Medical Center CEO Mike Duggan the most brazenly duplicitous public figure in Detroit? To feign moral outrage at the Karmanos Cancer Institute because it is taking its operation away from DMC is laughable. To imply that the taxpayers are being taken advantage of when DMC was given \$50 million in taxpayer money is worse.

Gary Hawkins

Walled Lake

Symptom of widespread ills

The timing of this announcement could not have been any more relevant. Last week was Cover the Uninsured Week. Health care providers, consumers and insurers came together with faith-based leaders and community organizers to raise awareness and advocate for a new way of providing health care.

Riverview's closing is not so much a sign of St. John Health System's ineptitude or callousness as a result of an entire health care system that is dysfunctional, immoral and unethical.

Now is not the time to point fingers at one player, but to realize we are all part of the problem and we are all the solution. Let's have the political will to demand change and fight for health care insurance for all God's children.

The Rev. Patrick P. Gahagen

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Detroit

Personal interests involved

As a resident of Detroit for the past 50 years and as past chief of the medical staff at Harper Hospital for six years, I agree with Mike Duggan. It is rather cynical that Dr. Jack Ruckdeschel states: "The plan is wonderful for the city of Detroit."

The poor people of Detroit will have to take at least two buses or a taxi to go to Detroit Receiving Hospital or Henry Ford to receive medical care or visit their hospitalized relatives. Their suffering will increase. Indeed, the personal interests of Ruckdeschel will be served.

Agustin Arbulu, MD

Detroit

DMC should expand in city

The CEO of DMC has a lot of nerve calling out the Karmanos Cancer Institute for seeking to expand and serve its cancer patients by acquiring Riverview. DMC, under Mike Duggan's profit-driven leadership, is expanding and constructing suburban sites, and it appears his true motive in attacking this venture is that it will mean less profits for DMC.

Instead of being the driving force behind slick commercials and the hiring of former news anchor talking heads to spin DMC tales, perhaps this former Wayne County prosecutor should come up with innovative plans to purchase and build more facilities in Detroit to serve the poor.

Now that is a commercial I would watch while waiting in a DMC ER room.

Greg Thrasher

Birmingham

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AWARE leader off to Florida

Tuesday, May 01, 2007

By Danielle Quisenberry

dquisenberry@citpat.com -- 768-4929

After less than two years as executive director of AWARE Inc., Nicole Kirksey is leaving the agency for victims of domestic violence.

She will move in June with her family to Melbourne, Fla., where her husband, Vincent, accepted a promotion at Ford Motor Co.

"I am definitely sad to leave AWARE, but it really is a phenomenal opportunity for my family," said Kirksey, 38, who with Vincent has a 7-year-old daughter, Lindsey.

Kirksey was hired in August 2005 to head AWARE, which provides services, such as crisis intervention and emergency housing, for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. She replaced Shirley Pascal, who retired after about 10 years in the position.

Despite Kirksey's short tenure, she will be difficult to replace, said Travis Fojtasek, AWARE board president.

"She has done an excellent job. ! She is going to be the gold standard," he said.

A search to replace her is in progress, Fojtasek said. The process is expected to take three to six months.

In the meantime, Rose Morrison, hired in October 2005 as an AWARE quality assurance consultant, will serve as interim director.

Morrison helped the agency earn good marks in January from a state board that reviews domestic-violence programs, Fojtasek said.

While Kirksey was director, she "brought a new way of thinking to the organization," Fojtasek said.

She developed new funding partners and empowered clients and employees, he said.

Kirksey said she managed to make technology upgrades and turn the focus more to strengthening violence survivors.

After the move, she said she plans to be a stay-at-home mom -- at least for a while.

Involved in anti-violence efforts since she was a student at the University of Michigan, she said she likely will get involved as an activist or a volunteer once the family settles.

"There is no way to really leave the movement. It has a way of finding me."

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THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

LACASA Garden Tour takes on artistic flair Early morning hour added to accommodate summer heat

Friday, April 20, 2007

BY HOPE LASH

News Special Writer

Take the time to stroll through the most fragrant and unique private gardens in Livingston County during the ninth annual

LACASA Garden Tour Weekend in July.

Colorful flowers will be showcased as part of the water, shade and sunny gardens selected for the garden tour. The eye-appealing displays will be open to the public Saturday and Sunday, July 14-15.

"We've added an early morning hour this year to accommodate for the summer heat," said LACASA Marketing and Community Relations Director Candy Jones-Guerin. "This year the gardens are located in a manner that will make it easier to finish the tour in one day."

The 10 gardens are in Fowlerville, Brighton and Howell. The variety of gardens will appeal to all tastes and have an artistic flair this year. "Brighton artist Sue Karkner's garden is very eclectic and artistic like herself," she said. "She has scattered outdoor room settings throughout her gardens that are wonderful."

Karkner's gardens include unusual items such as old windows hanging from trees, tables with china table settings, seat cushions and placemats made from sod, and even bubble machines for ambiance.

Another garden stop in Howell features shade gardens that will give tour visitors lots of ideas for incorporating color into a shaded area.

A fragrant rose garden and a white garden highlight the landscaping of Chris LaBree's home in Fowlerville. "Chris grows a lot of specimen plants and plants from seeds," explained Jones-Guerin. "It's a great place to stop because she'll have plants you won't see anywhere else on the tour."

A water garden is showcased at Hazel Bostic's home with interesting landscaping around the shoreline and a variety of fish in the pond.

"Hazel's had a water garden for a long time," she said, "and is a good resource for answering questions about what works in a water garden."

"Twilight in the Garden," a wine reception event, will be staged at the Victorian home of Tammy and David Bock on Byron Road in Howell. An orchard, several small ponds, and interesting walk through gardens surround the home. Wine tasting tables will be scattered throughout the property as guests enjoy sunset on the first day of the garden tour that exudes Victorian, country charm.

The annual LACASA Garden Tour Weekend raises funds to help victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Event coordinators are anticipating more than 1,500 garden-goers will attend this year's event.

"It's a great opportunity to take notes, pictures and find ideas for your own garden," said Jones-Guerin. "The homeowners are very knowledgeable. They enjoy discussing what plants they've had success with and what plants might work in other gardens."

Tickets for the LACASA garden tour are \$12 in advance and \$15 during garden tour weekend. Tickets for

the "Twilight in the Garden" food and wine tasting event are \$50 per person.

LACASA needs approximately 250 helpers to make the event run smoothly and is seeking community members to volunteer their time and talents.

Elsewhere in the area, the South Lyon Garden Walk, hosted by the Four Seasons Garden Club, was canceled this year. The South Lyon-based garden club plans to bring the walk back for 2008.

Details for a fifth Leppek Nursery Pond Tour are undecided at the time of this printing. Updated information will be posted on the nursery's Web site at www.leppeknursery.com.

In Pinckney, the Pinckney Garden Club is looking for people with historic homes and interesting gardens to participate in its first Historic Home & Garden Tour from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, July 28.

Those interested in showing off their properties should call Patsy Haggerty-McGuire Dible at 734-878-7020 or Jackie Morton at 734-954-0287.

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What's going on

Detroit Free Press

May 1, 2007

Share and care with Gleaners

Gleaners Community Food Bank in Detroit wants as many people as possible to visit Wednesday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to tell a story about something they've shared, or something shared with them. No act of sharing is too small.

Reporters from Sharing News Network will record the stories, and for each one, a meal will be donated to America's Second Harvest.

It's part of a national campaign called Spread the Sharing, led by Shedd's Country Crock margarine. The goal is to collect 1 million stories of sharing and to donate 1 million meals to hungry people by Thanksgiving.

Gleaners is at 2131 Beaufait, two blocks east of Mt. Elliott, between Vernor and Kercheval. You may also go online to share a story at www.SpreadtheSharing.com.

By Sylvia Rector

JET Reports Good Results

MIRS, April 30, 2007

The Jobs, Education and Training (JET) pilot programs, which are designed to help get people off welfare and into the workforce, have slightly decreased the number of Welfare caseloads, according to preliminary results released by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Preliminary results in the four pilot locations showed that caseloads held steady or slightly declined. In areas that did not offer JET, there was a five percent increase. In 2006, JET sites experienced a three percent increase in FIP caseload compared to an 11 percent increase in the remainder of the state.

Pilot programs in Kent, Oakland, Sanilac and Wayne counties were included in the Fiscal Year 2006 DHS budget. The program now serves 19 counties.

A net savings of \$16 million is forecasted for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. The program will cost approximately \$40 million to implement, but is expected to result in \$56 million in grant savings, according to the DHS.

"JET fundamentally changes the way we move families off welfare and toward self-sufficiency," said DHS Director Marianne **UDOW**. "The program supports them in developing job skills and moving permanently to self-sufficiency."

Law students assist needy

Cooley undergrads staff legal clinic to help families cope

May 1, 2007

BY L.L. BRASIER

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Every other Wednesday, a dozen or so people with plenty of problems but not much money gather at the Oakland County Law Library.

Some are dads denied the right to see their kids. Some are women trying to escape violent relationships. Others are grappling with guardianship of elderly parents.

All need legal help. And all are getting it, courtesy of the Lakeshore Legal Aid clinic, a new program in conjunction with the Thomas Cooley Law School.

The clinic -- the full name is Lakeshore Legal Aid--Cooley Law School Family Collaborative -- provides free help to those living in poverty, and recently began offering the Wednesday programs. The clinic, one of several in the state, has been operating in Pontiac since October.

The clinic has assisted 277 clients in family law issues. In some cases, attorneys guided families through the legal process, helping them file the necessary papers and providing them with forms. In 84 cases, attorneys provided direct representation in court.

"These are not things you can do on your own," said Paula Zimmer, who supervises the program at 136 Franklin Blvd. "So we are there to help in any way we can." The Oakland County Bar Foundation holds fund-raisers to help pay for the two staff attorneys who supervise four Cooley law students. More than 250 local attorneys also volunteer their time to help families file for divorces and custody actions, battle domestic violence and help parents gain access to their children when visitation has been denied.

Many of the cases involve unmarried parents in disputes over children, Zimmer said, and fathers who have been denied visitation. "So we're not always talking about a divorce here."

For the four Cooley law students, who get university credit for their work, the clinic gets them out of the classroom and gives them their first taste of practicing law. They are usually in their second year of law school and work under the direction of a licensed attorney, a practice allowed in Michigan under court rules.

"The whole point of it is to teach them litigation skills," said Cooley law professor Ashley Lowe, who supervises the students. "It also teaches them about important things like poverty and domestic violence."

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Budget clock ticking

Tuesday, May 01, 2007

PETER LUKE

SAGINAW NEWS LANSING BUREAU

LANSING -- Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm intends to use

\$300 million in June 1 cuts to schools and hospitals to leverage a tax increase out of a reluctant Legislature.

Granholm started the 30-day clock Monday, issuing a pair of budget-cutting notices. One tells K-12 school districts that the state will slice their summer aid payments by \$122 per pupil if there is no legislative agreement to balance the 2007 budget. A similar warning to hospitals and physicians promises a 6 percent cut in Medicaid payment rates.

Those cuts will take effect if she and lawmakers are unable to agree on a "balanced, rational and pragmatic" fix to an estimated \$700 million deficit in the current budget year, Granholm said. The deficit grows to more than \$1.3 billion in the 2008 budget year, which starts Monday, Oct. 1. To balance both budgets, Granholm has proposed more than \$1.5 billion in tax increases.

Granholm said she had no choice but to cut essential services, such as education and health care, given the Senate's rejection of her 2 percent excise tax on many business and consumer services. If lawmakers don't like that idea, she said the only other reasonable alternative was to increase the 3.9 percent income tax.

"We can invest in order to pull this state out of this economic slump, or we can disinvest and further the spiral downward," she said.

Senate Majority Leader Michael Bishop, a Rochester Republican, said if Democrats are serious about raising taxes, the Democratic-run House would pass either the excise or income tax. Given the political danger inherent in raising taxes, Democrats want a Republican buy-in.

Granholm and Bishop, in separate appearances, pulled back from partisan rhetoric. Granholm didn't single out Bishop or Senate Republicans for criticism. And Bishop said it was "imperative that we work together to address these pressing issues."

Standard & Poor's, the Wall Street rating agency, says it's prepared to downgrade the state's credit rating Friday, June 1, absent a tax increase or severe budget cuts lawmakers are unwilling to make. Moody's Investors Service didn't wait, issuing a downgrade Monday. It cited the state's cash shortage, reliance on budget gimmicks and "deteriorating financial and economic outlook."

Months of declines that put state revenues far below estimates and budget targets have stressed Michigan's budget. Granholm is expected to sign a K-12 budget bill for 2007 that closes \$310 million in deficits. But given three months of declines in sales tax revenues, lawmakers still have \$200 million in school budget deficits to fill.

Granholm said the general fund budget that pays for prisons, universities and health care is another \$500 million out of whack this fiscal year. State Treasurer Robert Kleine and legislative economists meet Friday, May 18, to gauge current tax collections and are expected to confirm those fresh deficit estimates.

Lawmakers then would face a two-week pressure cooker to reach an overall budget and tax agreement if they want to avoid cutting schools and hospitals June 1, per Granholm's Monday letters.

School funding cuts just one month before the Saturday, June 30, end of the fiscal year for most local schools would place cash-strapped K-12 districts in "serious jeopardy," said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan. He said school officials should begin preparing now by scaling back bus service and early-childhood education.

Granholt's health care cuts would save the state \$50 million but also would result in the loss of \$65 million in matching federal aid. David Fox, spokesman for the 16,000-physician Michigan State Medical Society, said doctors would stop seeing Medicaid patients, including more than 800,000 children, if the \$25 state payment for an office visit doesn't cover the cost of submitting the bill. v

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Published May 1, 2007

State workers fear layoffs

Civil Service Commission will consider rules for temporarily dismissing some

Chris Andrews
Lansing State Journal

Angela Pruitt can feel the tension among her co-workers in the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

The specter of layoffs and a partial government shutdown has many state workers on edge.

"It's a very shaky time," said Pruitt, a union steward for the United Auto Workers Local 6000. "Just the uncertainty is causing stress right now."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced budget cuts affecting schools and health care providers on Monday.

State workers know they could be next.

The Michigan Civil Service Commission will consider rules Wednesday for the temporary layoff of nonunionized workers. Procedures are already in place for those represented by unions.

The state's general fund has a \$500 million hole, more than halfway through the fiscal year.

Granholm is hoping drastic steps such as a government shutdown can be avoided if the Legislature will raise taxes and take other steps to balance the budget.

But Republicans have balked at raising taxes.

So, budget officials are analyzing plans for a government shutdown of nonessential services if the state runs out of money.

Granholm said she wants to have a budget-balancing strategy in place by the start of June.

"We haven't been at this level of crisis, certainly in the memory of anybody who is currently serving," Granholm said.

"Everything is on the table. We need all of these tools to be able to resolve this."

Contracts require the state to give the unions 30 days notice of layoffs.

State Budget Director Robert Emerson said it makes sense to give notice after the start of a pay

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period.

The next pay period starts Sunday.

"We are beginning to look at what all of our options are, including reopening contracts," Emerson said.

Potential suspensions

Budget officials are reviewing plans submitted by departments to determine which programs can be shut down.

Prisons, juvenile facilities and mental health institutions won't close, Emerson said, and state troopers will remain on patrol.

But, he said, Secretary of State branch offices might be shut down and most other programs could potentially be suspended.

The Granholm administration wants the Civil Service Commission to approve temporary layoff rules for nonunionized employees, such as managers and supervisors.

Its proposal calls for layoffs of up to 20 days, and they would not need to be consecutive.

Such a plan would allow the state to lay off a worker for a series of Fridays, for instance.

Union contracts require that temporary days be consecutive.

New rules are opposed

The new rules are being opposed by the Michigan Association of Governmental Employees, which represents about 2,000 managers, supervisors and confidential employees.

Association President Dale Threehouse said state workers already made sacrifices to solve budget problems a few years ago.

"You just can't always keep solving budget problems on the backs of employees," he said.

He also complained that the rules proposed for nonunionized workers treated them worse than those represented by unions.

UAW Local 6000 spokesman Alan Kilar said many state workers who made concessions a few years ago are upset that they are being asked to sacrifice again.

"They are looking to see what the governor will do," he said.

Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or candrews@lsj.com.

Government Shutdown Plans In The Works

MIRS, April 30, 2007

State Budget Director Bob **EMERSON** has ordered his department heads to go back to the drawing board because the state government shutdown options they gave him were unacceptable.

"Take another run at the list," he asked those directors because "I have problems" with the programs they suggested. Emerson is deep into meetings with state government labor unions, the state employer and others over a shutdown scenario just in case his boss and lawmakers don't find a solution to the budget deficit.

Emerson said he wants a plan that is "realistic and rational" and with the least amount of pain. He has already exempted the corrections department, the juvenile justice and mental health systems and other programs related to public health and safety.

Everything else is on the table including Secretary of State offices. Emerson revealed he has had discussions with Terri Lynn **LAND**'s office but has not come up with any specifics on that or any other programs yet.

"We are a few weeks away from that," he told *MIRS*. Hoping to avoid a shutdown the budget director warned, "At some point in time we do run out of money."

His objective right now is to figure out how many pay periods would be needed to meet a projected \$700 million deficit. In his talks with unions, he said he has already "verbally" given them a 30-day notice of possible layoffs, which is required in writing by the current contract. A 15-day notice for civil servants covered by labor agreements is also required, but Emerson was not sure if the notifications ran concurrently.

The Civil Service Commission will meet this week to revamp rules that give the administration the authority to order up to 20 temporary lay-off days without pay for the state's 15,000 non-union workers.

Asked today how likely a state shutdown of services may be, Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** said, "We want all of our options to be open...June 1 is the day we're striving for to have the full balanced budget plan take effect."

Between now and June 1, Granholm said the state would announce what a state shutdown plan would look like.



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FY 2007 Supplemental Appropriations Agreement Headed for Presidential Veto

This week, the House and Senate agreed on controversial Iraq war language in a compromise version of the fiscal year 2007 supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 1591. The House voted to approve the measure on April 25, and the Senate passed it on April 26. President Bush has indicated that he will veto the measure, and it is doubtful that there is sufficient support to override his veto. The timing for consideration of a revised supplemental spending measure is unclear. Also uncertain is whether and how Congress will address the other urgent spending provisions in the measure under consideration, for example, the funding to avert federal shortfalls in the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Some of the health and social services-related provisions in the bill include:

- Provide \$650 million to avert federal funding shortfalls in SCHIP, which is estimated to be \$624 million for 14 states at the enhanced match rate for all currently covered populations;
- Delay for one year, rather than the two years approved in the original Senate-passed measure, implementation of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services proposed Medicaid rule that would limit payment to public providers and any administrative action related to this rule and graduate medical education;
- Clarify that the moratorium on CMS rulemaking does not undermine CMS authority to enforce other program integrity requirements;
- Permits funds to states from the Social Services Block Grant from a previous emergency supplemental appropriation measure (P.L. 109-148) to remain available through FY 2009;
- Provide \$625 million for efforts to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic;
- Provide \$400 million for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program;
- Allow funds made available to the states through the Social Services Block Grants provided by the emergency supplemental appropriation provisions of the FY 2006 Defense Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-148) to remain available through FY 2009. The law provided \$550 million for such assistance, which is set to expire on Sept. 30, 2007 .
- Increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 over two years in three increments of 70 cents each. The bill also extends for 44 months, through August 2011, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit provided to businesses that hire certain disadvantaged workers, and expands the eligibility criteria for certain targeted groups. Under the measure, businesses could qualify for the credit for targeted employees hired after Dec. 31, 2007 , and before Sept. 1, 2011 .

Supplemental Measure Would Fund Small Business Child Care Grant Program

Section 7006 of H.R. 1591 would provide grant funds to states for assistance in the development of singular small-business child care programs or consortia of programs over three years in geographic areas where child care is not generally available or accessible. To meet the definitional criteria of a "small business," programs would have to employ two to 50 people on average throughout the previous calendar year. Such assistance may include technical assistance; assistance with start-up or training costs; scholarships for low-income wage earners; service provision to sick, disabled, or school-aged children; contracts with local resource and referral organizations or local health departments; covering renovation or operational expenses; or any other activity deemed appropriate by the state. The U.S. Health and Human Services Department would determine the amount of grant funds allocated to a state based on the state's population as compared to the population of all the states receiving this type of grant funding. Preference would be given to applicants for funding that represent a consortium of child care small businesses. States may grant only up to \$500,000 to a single applicant, and applicants would be required to put up matching funds covering 50 percent of costs in the first year, 66 2/3 percent in second year, and 75 percent in the third year.

Rockefeller and Snowe Introduce SCHIP Legislation

On April 26, Sens. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) introduced legislation to reauthorize SCHIP. The bill calls for more than \$58 billion in funding over five years for the program and seeks to revise the funding formula to make it more responsive to health care costs, population growth and the needs of low-income uninsured children. In addition, the legislation includes provisions addressing the following, among other issues:

- Expansion in eligibility income limit to 300 percent of the poverty level and other eligibility category options for states;
- New and revised outreach and enrollment tools;
- Equalizing provisions of standalone and Medicaid expansion programs;
- Strengthening premium assistance programs;
- Research and new initiatives related to children's access to and receipt of quality care; and
- Requirements for covering mental health and dental services.

Senate staff members recently reported that they anticipate that the Senate Finance Committee will consider the legislation in June and hope to have it considered on the Senate floor in July. The House and Senate will then still need to reconcile any differences in their respective bills.

Committee Approves Indian Health Care Improvement Act

On April 25, the House Natural Resources Committee approved major American Indian health legislation. The committee voted to approve a bill, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (H.R. 1328), to make changes to and reauthorize through 2017 the primary statute for federal delivery of health services to American Indian and Alaska Native people (P.L. 94-437). The bill seeks to increase access to quality medical care for American Indians and Alaska Natives and, among other provisions, would require Indian health care organizations to assist in enrolling qualified American Indians into Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP; make permanent current programs for diabetes; and authorize funding for assisted living, hospice care, long-term health care and traditional healing practices. The committee also approved an amendment to require the secretary of HHS to review the Indian Health Service's record of collecting reimbursements for patients from private health insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid. More information on the legislation can be found at

<http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/news/>.

House Panel Hears Poverty Concerns and Proposals

On April 26, the House Ways and Means Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee held a hearing at which witnesses reported on recent poverty statistics and proposed strategies to deal with poverty. According to testimony presented, approximately 37 million people live in poverty in the United States, 13 million of whom are children. The figure demonstrates a steady increase in the percentage of Americans living in poverty since the year 2000, and has prompted community and religious leaders, academics and others to push for a national poverty reduction agenda. Speakers at the hearing included Linda Gibbs of the New York City Human Resources Administration; Lawrence Mead of New York University; Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution; Gordon Berlin of MDRC; the Rev. Larry Snyder of Catholic Charities USA; and John Podesta of the Center for American Progress. There was broad support for increasing the earnings of workers with a minimum wage hike and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit. Other strategies included helping young people get a better education, reducing the number of children born out of wedlock, increasing the total number of hours worked by individuals to full time, and other types of earnings supplements. In addition to work incentives, Mead offered specific strategies in reducing poverty through what he calls "completing welfare reform." He supports a congressional mandate that all states impose full family sanctions when a parent(s) declines to cooperate with work activities, and a stronger Food Stamp Program work activities requirement. In an attempt to raise work levels, Mead suggested an "hours threshold" be added to the EITC by imposing a minimum number of hours (perhaps 20 or 30) an individual would need to work in order to benefit from the credit. More information is available at <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?congress=118>.

House Panel Holds Hearing on Health Insurance Coverage

On April 25, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing to examine the importance of health insurance coverage. Among the panelists was Michael Smith, secretary of the Vermont Agency of Administration, as well as representatives from various think tanks, businesses, and advocacy organizations. Smith focused on his state's comprehensive reform that has more than 35 different initiatives to simultaneously cover uninsured residents, improve health care quality, and curb the growth in health care costs. Specifically, he discussed the Catamount Health Plan, a new product available on the individual private market for uninsured residents in October 2007, and the Blueprint for Health initiative targeted for individuals with chronic conditions. Testimonies from the hearing can be found at http://energycommerce.house.gov/cmte_mtgs/110-he-hrg.042507.insurance.coverage.shtml.

Medicare Trustees Trigger Funding Warning

On April 23, trustees for the Medicare program issued their annual report. For the first time, the trustees triggered a "funding warning" because, for the second year in a row, Medicare is projected to draw more than 45 percent of its funding from general government revenue. The warning requires President Bush to propose spending cuts in the program next year. According to the report, Social Security's trust funds will be exhausted in 2041, and Medicare's hospital insurance trust fund will be exhausted in 2019. The report also indicates that the cost estimate for the Medicare prescription drug benefit over the next 10 years has decreased significantly and that inpatient hospitalizations among Medicare beneficiaries decreased from about 13.8 million to about 13.1 million during the past year. A summary of the 2007 report can be found at <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TRSUM/trsummary.html>.

CMS to Announce Second Round of Medicaid Transformation Grants

CMS plans to announce in the near future that the second Medicaid Transformation Grant solicitation will be released shortly. No specific date has yet been given for the announcement. Agencies will need to use the grants.gov web site to apply. For additional information, call Martha Roherty at (202) 682-0100.

APHSA and NASMD Issue Policy Statement on Medicaid Citizenship Documentation

On April 26, APHSA and its affiliate, the National Association of State Medicaid Directors, issued their policy position statement on Medicaid citizenship documentation. This statement provides brief historical background about the process used in the states prior to the Deficit Reduction Act. The document discusses the 2005 Office of Inspector General report, which concluded that 47 states were using self-declaration of U.S. citizenship for Medicaid. The document describes some of the burdens states have been experiencing since the implementation of the DRA along with recommendations. The recommendations include permitting states the option to utilize the standards

most appropriate to their population; providing individuals with the reasonable opportunity period to present satisfactory documentation; permitting states to accept documentation from federally recognized tribes; and providing retroactive eligibility for any children or adults who were improperly denied Medicaid services because of the DRA's citizenship requirements. The document is available [here](#).

John Wagner Appointed Director of California's Department of Social Service

On April 24, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) announced that John Wagner had been appointed director of the state's Department of Social Services. Wagner's more than 15 years of senior policymaking experience in the field of human services include, beginning in 2004, service as assistant secretary for children, youth and families for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, where he coordinated policies and programs for the Office of Children, Youth and Families with other state agencies. Wagner also served as commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, where he oversaw administration of cash assistance, shelter and food assistance programs. More information is available at <http://gov.ca.gov/index.php?/press-release/5995/>.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Colleen Steinman or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Governor Granholm declares May as Foster Care Month

May 1, 2007

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared May as Foster Care Month in Michigan to highlight the vital role that foster families play in caring for the state's 18,500 foster children.

To celebrate the month, the annual state conference organized by the Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents will be held May 18-20 at the Lansing Holiday Inn South.

"This month pays tribute to the foster families who have opened their hearts and their homes to foster children," said Marianne Udow, Department of Human Services director. "These caring, dedicated individuals provide stability and support in traumatic times for youths every day."

Foster Care Month also provides an opportunity to make Michigan residents more aware of the need for caring, dedicated foster parents and the needs of children in foster care. Children usually enter foster care because of neglect or abuse in their homes. Foster care families provide safe, stable and supportive homes for these children and youths until they can be returned to their parents or are adopted into permanent homes.

Developing an adequate number of qualified foster families and relative caregivers is critical for the DHS child- and family-centered approach to foster care. This approach focuses on keeping children in their own homes whenever possible safely. When children must be removed, efforts focus on keeping children with siblings, relatives and in their communities to minimize the disruption in their lives.

"When children must be removed for their own safety, they often don't understand why and are frightened and confused," Udow said. "Caring foster families help provide important stability to these youths and can play a critical role in helping reunify the family or providing a permanent adoptive home. I encourage anyone who wants to help Michigan's children to explore becoming a foster or adoptive parent."

DHS rigorously screens foster and adoptive parents, provides training and offers a variety of support services including clothing and holiday allowances for children.

For more information about foster parenting, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

UPPER PENINSULA VIDEO STORES JOIN IN THE CAMPAIGN TO FIND HOMES FOR MICHIGAN'S FOSTER CHILDREN

Local stores distribute DVD of children who are waiting to be adopted

May 1, 2007

IRON MOUNTAIN – More than 4,000 children in Michigan are either waiting for their adoption to be finalized or waiting for a family. Most of these children, whose parental rights have been terminated, are among those hardest to place – kids who are older and members of minorities and/or sibling groups. Adoption for older youth in the foster care system is a priority to ensure they do not leave the foster care system without a connection to a supportive adult.

Forty of these children are featured in a heart-warming photographic exhibit called the Michigan Heart Gallery. The Michigan Heart Gallery, a collaborative effort between the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, the Adoptive Family Support Network and the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), seeks to bring our community closer to the faces and voices of children waiting for a “forever family.”

The Michigan Heart Gallery features portraits of Michigan's waiting children who come from various regions of the state and are representative of different races and ages.

This exhibit visited the Iron Mountain and Escanaba areas in March. Although the exhibit has moved on to tour the rest of Michigan, Family Video is keeping the Heart Gallery available and accessible by providing, at no cost, copies of a promotional DVD. This DVD features the photographs from the exhibit, video of children who are waiting to be adopted and information about the adoption process for families who are ready to begin the process.

“We are very pleased to help the Heart Gallery campaign promote adoption for children needing homes,” Allison Neumann, Iron Mountain Family Video store manager, said. Heart Gallery DVDs will be available at all Family Video stores in Iron Mountain, Houghton, Menominee, Negaunee, Marquette and Escanaba.

The photographs in The Heart Gallery were taken by more than 40 professional photographers who donated their time, talent and resources to take portraits that help capture the spirit of children in the foster care system. The Heart Gallery allows these children to be seen in an artistic, poignant and tasteful photographic exhibit. The kids thoroughly enjoyed their photo shoot experience. Some children were able to help select which portrait to feature in The Heart Gallery, while others came up with their own poses and some were given lessons in photography during the photo shoot, allowing them to become budding photographers themselves.

Additional information on adoption can be obtained by contacting the Region 1 DHS office in Escanaba at 906-786-4400 or writing to Region 1 at 305 Ludington St., Escanaba, Michigan, 49829.

For more information about the Michigan Heart Gallery and how you can get involved, please call (800) 589-6273 or visit The Michigan Heart Gallery Web site at www.miheart.org